



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Secretary LaHood: Wyoming Becomes the 20th State to Ban Texting While Driving

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today applauded Wyoming for becoming the 20th state to enact a statewide ban prohibiting drivers from texting while behind-the-wheel. The new ban will allow law enforcement officials to ticket anyone caught texting while driving in Wyoming.

"Wyoming has taken an important step to eliminate distracted driving," said Secretary LaHood. "Texting while driving, like talking on cell phones while driving, is dangerous to the driver doing it and all of those around them."

According to research by the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA), nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted or inattentive driver, and more than half a million were injured.

In 2009, more than 200 distracted driving bills were considered by state legislatures and legislative activity is expected to remain strong in 2010.

On February 22, Secretary LaHood unveiled sample legislation developed by NHTSA to be used as a starting point for crafting new state laws to prohibit texting while behind-the-wheel.

The sample state law is patterned on the Executive Order issued by President Obama on October 1, 2009, directing federal employees not to engage in text messaging while driving government-owned vehicles or with government-owned equipment. Federal employees were required to comply with the ban starting on December 30, 2009.

In addition, on January 26, Secretary LaHood announced federal guidance to prohibit texting by drivers of commercial vehicles such as large trucks and buses. Truck and bus drivers who text while driving commercial vehicles may be subject to civil or criminal penalties of up to \$2,750.

Secretary LaHood announced the department's plan to pursue that regulatory action at the Distracted Driving Summit he convened in September 2009. The department recently launched a federal website, distraction.gov, as a forum and information clearinghouse.